

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1 and 5 have been amended. New claim 8 has been added. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 5-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that the Applicant regards as the invention. In response, Applicant has amended claim 5 to remove the term "differently". Applicant respectfully submits that claim 5, as amended, is not indefinite and respectfully requests that the indefiniteness rejection of claims 5-6 be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 1,733,034 to Tufenkjian ("Tufenkjian") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,826,249 to Bradbury ("Bradbury").

Applicant respectfully submits that neither Tufenkjian nor Bradbury, singularly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least one of the distinguishing features of amended independent claim 1, namely, a plurality of low-elasticity textile tubular pockets arranged side-by-side, wherein adjacent tubular pockets of the plurality of tubular pockets are directly interconnected via seams. In addition, the cited references fail to disclose that the plurality of tubular pockets are enclosed by a shell made of a textile material of low elasticity and that when the plurality of pouches are filled with compressed air, the shell is tensioned forming an actual seat or backrest surface via a top surface of the tensioned shell.

Tufenkjian is directed to a pneumatic mattress that includes a plurality of tubes 1 formed of rubber or another resilient material. The tubes 1 are held in spaced relation by a cover 2 formed with casings 3 to receive the tubes 1. Portions of the cover 2 between the casings 3 form strips 4 which separate adjacent ones of the casings 3.

Bradbury is directed to a thin inflatable elastomeric vehicle seat that includes a pair of elastomeric sheets that are heat sealed together to define a peripheral manifold and discrete horizontal sections. The horizontal sections are pressurized with a gas to stretch the elastomeric material into its hysteresis range and then attach the same to a frame to provide a cushioned seat. Bradbury has been cited as teaching use of the same cushioned structure for a seat cushion and a backrest cushion.

Applicant respectfully submits that the outer or main covering 12 as disclosed in Tufenkjian fails to form an actual seat or backrest surface as claimed. Applicant respectfully submits that Bradbury fails to cure the deficiencies noted above of Tufenkjian. Additionally, as illustrated in, for example, FIG. 3 of Tufenkjian, strips 4 are used to provide separation between casings 3. In contrast to claim 1, the portions of cover 2 that form the casings 3 to receive the tubes 1 are not directly interconnected via seams; rather, adjacent ones of the casings 3 are separated from one another by the strips 4. Applicant respectfully submits that Bradbury fails to cure these deficiencies of Tufenkjian.

Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least the reasons set forth above, amended independent claim 1 distinguishes over the cited combination of Tufenkjian and Bradbury. Withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 1 as obvious over the cited combination of Tufenkjian and Bradbury is respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 2-4 depend from and further limit independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. These dependent claims are therefore deemed to distinguish over the cited combination of Tufenkjian and Bradbury for at least the same reasons as those set forth above relative to the rejection of independent claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 2-4 as obvious over the cited combination of Tufenkjian and Bradbury is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tufenkjian in view of Bradbury and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,965,899 to Sekido et al. ("Sekido").

Dependent claims 5-7 depend from and further limit independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. These dependent claims are therefore deemed to distinguish over the cited combination of Tufenkjian and Bradbury for at least the same reasons as those set forth above relative to the rejection of independent claim 1. Sekido has been cited as teaching an inflatable cushion including tubular elements that vary in size. Applicant respectfully submits that Sekido fails to cure the deficiencies noted above of Tufenkjian and Bradbury. Withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 5-7 as obvious over the cited combination of Tufenkjian, Bradbury, Sekido is respectfully requested.

New dependent claim 8 depends from and further limits independent claim 1 in a patentable sense. This dependent claim is therefore deemed to distinguish over the cited combination of Tufenkjian and Bradbury for at least the same reasons as those set forth above relative to the rejection of independent claim 1. Furthermore, the Office Action concedes that Tufenkjian fails to disclose a plurality of tubular pockets that are sewn to a shell along further seams. However, the Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to sew the pockets to the shell instead of using fasteners (10) for a more permanent and secure attachment means. Applicant respectfully disagrees. According to claim 8, at least one of the plurality of tubular pockets is sewn to the shell along further seams. When the plurality of pouches are filled with compressed air, the shell is tensioned forming an actual seat or backrest surface via a top surface of the tensioned shell. This is in contrast to the assertion made in the Office Action to sew the pockets to the shell instead of using fasteners (10) for a more permanent and secure attachment means and not for the purpose of the shell forming an actual seat or backrest surface. For this additional reason, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claim 8 is in condition for allowance.

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In view of the above amendment, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Shoaib A. Mithani

Registration No.: L0067

WINSTEAD PC

P.O. Box 50784

Dallas, Texas 75201

(214) 745-5400

Attorneys For Applicant